

What is claimed is:

1. A suture strand suitable for use as a suture or ligature, comprising:
a core formed of a plurality of fibers of a first material;
a cover surrounding the core, the cover including the first material and a second material different than the first material.
2. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the first material comprises a high tensile-strength material.
3. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the first material is a high molecular weight, high tenacity material.
4. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the first material is ultrahigh molecular weight polyethylene.
5. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the second material is a polymer selected from the group consisting of PET, polyester, coated urethanes, and mixtures thereof.
6. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the second material is substantially opaque.
7. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the first material is substantially transparent.

8. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the core comprises a plurality of fibers of the first material twisted together to form a core element.

9. A suture strand according to claim 8, wherein each fiber comprises a bundle of filaments of the first material.

10. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the cover is braided around the core.

11. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the cover comprises a plurality of fibers of the first material, and wherein each fiber is individually sheathed in the second material.

12. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the cover comprises;
a plurality of fibers of the first material; and
a single, unitary sheath surrounding the entire cover.

13. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the cover comprises a plurality of fibers of the first material, and wherein each fiber is individually coated with the second material.

14. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the cover comprises:
a plurality of fibers of the first material; and
a coating surrounding the entire cover.

15. A suture strand according to claim 1, wherein the cover further comprises a secondary coating formed of a second material.

16. A suture strand according to claim 15, wherein the secondary coating comprises a friction-enhancing material.

17. A suture strand according to claim 15, wherein the secondary coating comprises silicone.

18. A suture strand suitable for use as a suture or ligature, comprising:
a first covering component formed of ultrahigh molecular weight polyethylene;
a second covering component formed of a polymeric material surrounding the cover.

19. A suture strand according to claim 18, wherein the first covering component comprises an annular braid formed of a plurality of fibers of ultrahigh molecular weight polyethylene.

20. A suture strand according to claim 19, wherein the second covering component comprises a plurality of sheath elements, each sheath element surrounding a different individual fiber of the first covering component.

21. A suture strand according to claim 18, wherein the second covering component is a single, unitary sheath surrounding the first covering component.

22. A suture according to claim 18, wherein the second covering component is a coating.

23. A suture according to claim 19, wherein the second covering component comprises a coating applied individually to each fiber of the first covering component.

24. A suture strand according to claim 18 wherein the polymeric material is selected from the group consisting of PET, polyester, coated urethanes, and mixtures thereof.

25. A suture strand according to claim 18, wherein the polymeric material comprises substantially opaque material.

26. A suture strand according to claim 18, wherein the first covering component surrounds a core of twisted fibers.

27. A suture according to claim 26, wherein the first covering component is braided around the core.

28. A suture according to claim 26, wherein the twisted fibers are formed of ultrahigh molecular weight polyethylene.

29. A suture according to claim 18, wherein the first covering component consists essentially of a plurality of fibers of ultrahigh molecular weight polyethylene.

30. A suture strand according to claim 18, wherein the second covering component further comprises a secondary coating formed of a material other than ultrahigh molecular weight polyethylene.

31. A suture strand according to claim 18, wherein the secondary coating comprises a friction-enhancing material.

32. A suture strand according to claim 18, wherein the secondary coating comprises silicone.

33. A suture strand according to claim 26, wherein:

the first covering component comprises an annular braid formed of a plurality of fibers, each of the fibers in the first covering component having a first diameter; and

each of the fibers in the core has a second diameter larger than the first diameter.